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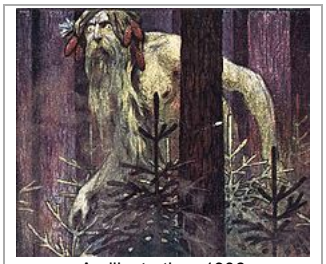
Leshy

The **Leshy** (also **Leshi**; Russian: леший, IPA: [ˈlʲeʂɨj]; literally, "[he] from the forest", Polish: *boruta, borowy, leśnik, leśniczy, lasowik, leszy*) is a tutelary deity of the forests in Slavic mythology. The plural form in Russian is лешие, *leshiye* (retaining the stress on the first syllable). As the spirit rules over the forest and hunting, he may be related to the Slavic god Porewit.[1][2]

There is also a deity, named Svyatibor (Svyatobor, Svyatibog), who is mentioned in the beliefs of the Eastern and Western Slavs as the god of forests and the lord of the leshies. His functions were identical to Veles.[3]

The Leshy is masculine and humanoid in shape, is able to assume any likeness[4] and can change in size and height.[5][6] He is sometimes portrayed with horns and surrounded by packs of wolves and bears.[1] In some accounts, Leshy is described as having a wife (*Leshachikha*, *Leszachka*, *Lesovikha*) and children (*leshonki*, *leszonky*). He is known by some to have a propensity to lead travelers astray and abduct children (which he shares with Chort, the "Black One"), which would lead some to believe he is an evil entity. He is, however, also known to have a more neutral disposition towards humans, dependent on the attitudes and behaviours of an individual person, or local population, towards the forest.[7] Leshy could take away to the forest people, who were cursed by their relatives, in particular, by parents.[8] Some would therefore describe him as more of a temperamental being, like a fairy.[9]

Leshy



An illustration, 1906

Grouping	Tutelary deity Spirit
First reported	In folklore
Country	Slavic Europe
Habitat	Forests

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Names and etymology

The **Leshy** is known by a variety of names and spellings including the following:[10][11][12][13][14]

Drawing by Ivan Yizhakevych, "Niva" magazine, 1904

Main name variations:

- **Borovoi** (Russian: Боровой, Polish: *Borowy*) "[he] of the forest"
- **Gayevoi** (Russian: Гаевой, Polish: *Gajowy*) "[he] of the grove"
- **Leshak** (Russian: Лешак, Serbo-Croatian: *Lešak*, Лешак)
- **Leshy** (Russian: Леший, Belarusian: Лешы, Polish: *Leszy*, Czech: *Leši*, Serbo-Croatian: *Lešij*, Лешиј)
- **Lesnik** (Russian: Лесник, Polish: *Leśnik*, Bulgarian: Лесник, Serbo-Croatian: *Lesnik*, Лесник)
- **Lesovik** (Russian: Лесовик, Belarusian: Лесавік, Ukrainian: Лісовик, Serbo-Croatian: *Lesovik*, Лесовик)
- **Lesovoi** (Russian: Лесово́й, Czech: *Lesovij*, Serbo-Croatian: *Lesovoj*, Лесовој)
- **Lesun** (Russian: Лесун, Belarusian: Лясун)
- **Mezhsargs** (Latvian: *Mežsargs*) "forester"
- **Mishkinis** (Lithuanian: *Miškinis*) "woodsman"
- **Mishko velnias** (Lithuanian: *Miško velnias*) "forest devil"
- **Vir'ava** (Erzya: Вирьава) "forest mother"

Euphemistic titles:

- **He** (Russian: он) also used for the devil, based on superstition prohibiting invocation of evil
- **He himself** (Russian: он сам) like "he"[9]
- **Les chestnoi** (Russian: Лес честной) "honorable one of the forest"
- **Les pravedniy** (Russian: Лес праведный) "righteous one of the forest"
- **Lesnoi dedushka/ded** or **Dedushka-lesovoi** (Russian: Лесной дедушка/дед, Дедушка-лесовой, Belarusian: Лясны дзед, Polish: *Leśny dziad*) "forest grandfather"
- **Lesnoi dukh** (Russian: Лесной дух) "forest spirit"
- **Lesnoi dyadya** (Russian: Лесной дядя) "forest uncle"
- **Lesnoi khozyain** (Russian: Лесной хозяин) "forest master"
- **Lesnoi zhitel'** (Russian: Лесной житель)"forest dweller" or "woodsman"
- **Lesny muzhik** (Czech: *Lesní mužík*, Slovak: *Lesný mužík*), "forest man"

Home of the leshy. "Fairy Forest at Sunset" by Ivan Bilibin, 1906.

In popular culture

- Leshiy is used as a prototype for the main character of Vladimir Vysotsky's song "Lukomorye", where leshy is depicted as an alcoholic that spends all his money on drinking and is abusive against his wife.[8]
- Leshiy is mentioned in the prologue of Alexander Pushkin's poem "Ruslan and Lyudmila": "…There are miracles: there the leshiy wanders…" (Russian: …Там чудеса: там леший бродит…)

"The Leshy" by P. Dobrinin, 1906.

- "Leszy" is one of the monsters featured in Andrzej Sapkowski's fictional world of *The Witcher*. "Leshen" is a woodland spirit that appears in the video game *The Witcher 3* created by CD Projekt Red based on Sapkowski's novels.
- "Leshiy" [Леший] is a song by the Russian metal band Arkona from their 2011 album *Slovo*.
- "Leshy" character in the 1994 computer game Quest for Glory: Shadows of Darkness by Sierra Entertainment
- *The Wood Demon* [*Леший*] (1889) is a four-act comedy by Anton Chekhov.
- "Leshii" is a shapeshifting pagan god featured in season 5 of *Supernatural*.
- "Leshii" is a character that appears as a bear-like spirit in the 2007 comic *Hellboy: Darkness Calls* in which he lets Hellboy take cover from Baba Yaga in his forest for one night.
- Leshii appears in the digital card game *Cabals: Magic & Battle Cards*.
- The deity in the movie *The Ritual* highly resembles the Leshy. The leshy is a spirt or an entity in the it live in the forest and hunts in the forest.
- Leshy is a titular character and a behind the scene villain in the film *The Woodkin*. It is presented as a stag in its prime.
- "Leshak" is a battleship-class vessel in the MMORPG Eve online

See also

- Äbädä (Tatarstan)
- Basajaun (Basque Country)
- Berstuk (Wend people of Germany)
- Boruta (Slavic region)
- Grand Bois (loa) (Haiti)
- Ochopintre (Republic of Georgia)
- Jinn (Arabian, Islamic)
- Vörsa (Komi Republic)
- List of nature deities (Slavic mythology)
- Shatans (Belarus, Russian Federation)
- Shishiga (Russia)
- Woodwose (medieval Europe)
- Yum Caax (Mayan)

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Kyi, Shchek and Khory
legendary brothers often
along with their sister **I**
according to the *Primary*
were the founders of the me
Kiev, now the capital of Uk
is no precise and historicall